The News Bulletin

of the

Near East Christian Council

From Iran to Morocco, from Turkey to the Sudan...

Theological Education Issue. W.S.

EASTERTIDE 1960

On the air

Permission has been granted to establish a Christian radio station with medium and short wave transmitters, to be based in Ethiopia.

Plans are now being made and in about two years, operation will begin. The franchise owner is the Lutheran World Federation, and the Near East Christian Council will participate in about one half of the program time in the languages of the area.

Your support is needed — in prayer, in program planning, in talent and production.

For men will listen to the Gospel of our Lord on Near East/Africa Radio!

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THE NEWS BULLETIN OF THE NEAR EAST CHRISTIAN COUNCIL

EASTERTIDE 1960

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Photo by R. H. Kimpton

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Newness of Life

"...even so we also shall walk in newness of life."

The resurrection meant newness of life for Christ, our Lord and Saviour. His life after the resurrection had a new quality and glory. In the cross and in the resurrection He had conquered sin and death; good had overcome evil; love had surmounted hate; light had dispelled darkness; God was victorious over Satan. We thank God for the risen Christ, who is the Hero and Captain of our salvation.

And we who believe in Christ share in this newness of life. For us the chains of sin are broken, the sting of death is removed. We now walk by the Spirit, and the fruits of the Spirit in our lives are love and joy and peace. We are born again to a new quality of life.

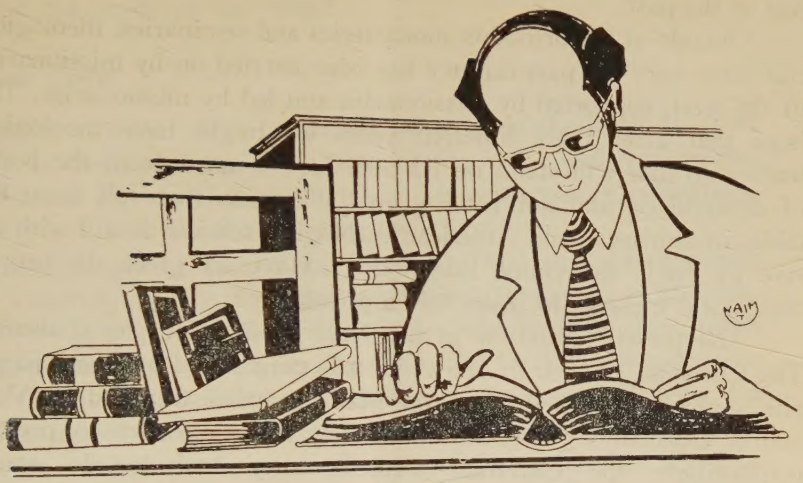
Let us pray that we may realize more of the meaning, the power and the actuality of our new life in Christ.

Let us pray also for the Theological Seminaries and Christian Training Schools where men and women are being trained intellectually and spiritually to preach this message of newness of life in Christ. These schools need buildings and books, but above all they need teachers and students who are qualified and consecrated. May the graduates of these schools bring new life into the churches.

Let us pray for all the means by which the Word of Life is being presented: preaching, teaching, radio, personal conversation, the witness of Christian service, the distribution of the printed Word. About forty Christian scholars, mostly in the Near East, are engaged in preparing a revision of the century-old Arabic translation of the Holy Bible, and they need our prayers that the new revision may represent the original more accurately and may make the way of life clearer and more attractive.

In all things let us walk in newness of life.

—John Alexander Thompson
Cairo.



On The Frontier of Faith

***** The Near East has an historical tradition of theological leadership. Great names of the past come readily to mind, not only in the Christian tradition but in other traditions as well. It has pioneered in "frontier theology" and yet today that keen edge has seemingly blunted and become dull. But why? and its correlative question, how? How can the blade be sharpened so that the sword of the Gospel may pierce into the ever-hardening mass of nominalism, secularism and separatism, the Near East today? This is the question facing theological education and the chairman of the Council's Committee, Dr. 'Abd-al-Malik, and all of us. We live on a frontier, in a constant "meeting" with all men. Our faith senses this and is at times bewildered and inward, but to live on the frontier is to think on the frontier, to train leadership to be the leading edge of the Gospel of salvation.**

The Near East, that once boasted of having the earliest Christian theological centers, that claimed leaders and thinkers in the revolutionary faith of Jesus Christ — of what can it boast today? As one visualizes the magnificent and scholarly catechetical school, such as that of Alexandria which claimed such scholars as Clement of Alexandria and the brilliant Origin, one wonders whether the

Near East can become again a center of theological leadership as it was in the past.

Outside of the orthodox monasteries and seminaries, theological education over the past century has been carried on by missionaries of the west, supported by missionaries and led by missionaries. The hope that after these hundred years we might have theological leadership that will stand on its own feet, weaned from the bottle of dependence, and not feeding on the crumbs that fall from the tables of European and American theological schools, is still with us. Are we ready to assume leadership? Have we given the proper theological training to make this a possibility?

The present situation in the Near East offers its challenge. The Christian Church in 185 A.D. was confronted by many pagan philosophical schools through the Mediterranean area and in Alexandria especially. The Christians felt that, in order to present convincingly the Christian witness, they had to do something. And, in that year, under the leadership of Demetrius, the twelfth bishop of Alexandria, the catechetical school was started. It was the product of the best that the human mind could offer.

The Questions

Secular education in the Near East is going ahead in leaps and bounds. The Arab East claims many institutions of higher education. There are five universities in Egypt, one in Syria, and three in Lebanon, to mention only a small portion of the area. Can theological education in the Near East claim a place among these institutions?

There are other questions too. What type of men attend our theological schools? Are they filled with a burning passion to pioneer? Are they baptised with the power of the Spirit, with a compulsion to reach to the frontiers in witness to their Lord? Do our schools sharpen this passion, intensify it?

What are the needs of the churches that are supplied by our theological institutions? Do the institutions train for these needs? What changes of program or method of education are necessary in

rder to better qualify the new minister to meet the needs of the ea and the needs of the time?

A Closer Look

But let us make a bit of a survey of some of the institutions of he area as they are today. This issue of the *News Bulletin* contains ore detailed reports of them, but there are many places unmentioned due to lack of space for complete coverage.

The Evangelical Theological Seminary in Cairo was founded early a century ago by the American United Presbyterian Mission. t has provided an educated ministry for the Evangelical Church hroughout these years. At its beginning in 1863, it offered three ears of theological training to graduates of the Assiut College. Its ork has indeed been wonderful. About 200 ministers in the Nile alley are graduates of that institution. Other graduates serve in he Sudan, the South Sudan, Syria, Iraq, and Kuwait.

However in order to meet the challenge of the day, this institution has a long way to go. They have need for more trained professors on their staff. The library should be developed to meet the rowing need for a well-educated ministry. The outlook of training hould include the needs of the whole Arab world. Gratifying it is o note that six of the thirty-six members of the student body this ear are from other denominational groups, indicating a movement owards ecumenicity and a desire to serve the entire area.

The Near East School of Theology in Beirut also serves the rea in an admirable manner. Its location in Beirut and its support y five church and mission groups enables it to combine ecumenicity ith high academic standards. In the thirty years since its founding, ore than one hundred graduates have gone forth to serve the hurches in the Near East and the world. Owing to its ecumenical oundations and international characteristics, instruction is all in he common language of English.

Two commendable items stand out with regard to the N.E.S.T. irst, its ecumenicity in staff and student body, and, secondly, its igh academic standards and affiliation with the American Uni-

versity of Beirut. It is to be hoped that more of the Arabic-speaking students will avail themselves of the advantage of theological education in this school.

For a Stronger Witness

May we summarize the situation — the needs and the means — with the following:

(a) The place of theological education in the Near East should be a subject for new and creative thinking. A study of the area and the challenges it offers makes it imperative — rather, impelling — that Christian leaders of the Near East should re-study, deeply and accurately, the theological situation and the ever-growing need for Christian pioneer leadership.

(b) In order to provide enduring leadership for the Church in the Near East, and particularly in the Arab world, it is imperative that instruction in Arabic be presented. If we hope for leaders for the Church in this area, they have to be trained to present a Christian witness in the prevailing language of the area. They must be allowed to think interpretively and creatively in their own language.

(c) Key reference books, and standard theological works, should be translated into the language of the area.

(d) Although the exchange of personnel and professors with the churches in America and Europe is very essential and should continue, we should envision a new era of indigenous leadership. To stimulate minds for an incisive thrust into the rapidly changing face of the Near East should be primary concern. A plan for creating an atmosphere that would lead to such stimulation should be made and realized.

(e) Efforts should be made in order to attract college graduates into the ministry of the Church. This is, of course, a shared responsibility with the local churches. At the same time, efforts should be maintained for the deeper education of the lay leadership within the churches.

Let us hope that the day may come in which the Church in the Near East may have the trained and educated leadership it needs to stand on the frontier of faith. Christ is worthy of the best. His Church in the Near East is worthy of the best.

THE EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY IN CAIRO

oove : Students and faculty

ght Center : Main Building

ght : Students in the Library

THE NEAR EAST SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY IN BEIRUT

Above :

The Main Building

Center :

A Student in the Library

Below : A Chapel Service

OVHANNES P. AHARONIAN

..... And in Beirut

The Near East School of Theology located in Beirut, Lebanon, is the only seminary in the Near East to serve the evangelical churches in Iran, Iraq, Arabia, Turkey, Cyprus, Greece, Syria and Lebanon. The School is favored by its strategic location in a place where a liberal attitude towards education prevails. The presence of the American University of Beirut, with which the Near East School of Theology has a close academic tie, adds much to this attitude.

The Seminary under its present name came into existence in 1932, with the merger of the School of Religion in Athens, supported by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, and the School of Religious Workers in Beirut, supported by the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions. In 1945, these two Boards were joined in their support by two national evangelical churches: the Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon and the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East. In 1950, they were joined by the Arab Evangelical Episcopal Community of Jordan.

The School is run by a Board of Managers, composed of representatives of these five sponsoring bodies. It has pioneered in the field of ecumenical relationship as is evidenced in the active participation of the five groups in the support of the Seminary, as well as in its student life. The ecumenical church plays an important part in every aspect of its international and interdenominational nature.

Graduates and Courses

Among the graduates of the School are representatives from Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, France, Greece, Bulgaria and Jordan. There are also Americans who enroll as special students in order to concentrate on a field of study peculiar to the Arab world. Since 1932, there have been around 100 graduates, most of them working in the Near East although the rest are scattered in more than eleven other countries.

The Near East School of Theology cooperates with the American University of Beirut in offering a "combined course" whereby the students of either institution can enroll for courses in the other, and, at the end of study, obtain a B.A. degree from the University and a diploma from the Seminary, either in Theology or Chrsitian Education.

A similar arrangement exists between the Seminary and the Beirut College for Women for women students.

In addition, the School has a three-year Seminary course for

those who have finished the college freshman year, or its equivalent. This course leads to the granting of a certificate in Theology or in Christian Education.

Service and Survey

The School has rendered an invaluable service to the evangelical churches and Christian institutions of the Near East and other lands. In one Evangelical Church group, all of the clergy are N.E.S.T. graduates. This year the student body numbers some twenty regular and seven special students. This is the largest student body of the past ten years. But still the need is greater.

A recent survey made it evident that a student body nearly twice as large, with six or seven graduates a year, is needed to meet the actual demands of the evangelical churches in the Near East.

According to this survey, there are some 133 Evangelical Churches in this area of the Near East: 93 in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan; 40 in Iran, Iraq, Arabia, Turkey, Cyprus and Greece. These churches are now served by 63 active pastors and two assistant pastors. There is need for at least twenty-one additional pastors and assistant pastors in churches able to furnish support.

There is also need for at least eight directors of Christian Education in churches able to furnish support.

The case of church-sponsored schools needs special consideration. In these schools there are approximately 40 Bible teachers. Many of these positions are at present filled by inadequately trained people. At least ten well trained Bible teachers are needed.

Plans for the Future

The School is deeply concious of the needs of the churches. Therefore it envisages plans for present and future development. Some progress has been made in connection with recruitment, faculty, curriculum, library and location.

It is the responsibility of the churches to recruit young people for Christian service. The School, however, is prepared to help the churches and cooperate with them in this respect. It cannot provide more adequate support for pastors and religious workers, but according to the above-mentioned survey, it can be assumed that a large number of graduates can be placed in paid positions.

Faculty and Future

An increase in the faculty with more regular permanent staff is a development which has already been implemented by enlisting specialists in certain fields. In a short while, new professors will join the faculty.

With this, a revision of the curriculum for granting theological degree is under way. This year an additional year of study has been inaugurated over and above the previous requirements for a diploma for the granting of a B.D. degree. There is also an additional year beyond the certificate course

A Classroom Scene in the N. E. S. T.

for the granting of a Th.B. degree.

In connection with the curriculum, strengthening of the program in Islamics is another aim of the School. N.E.S.T., in its strategic location in the Islamic world, feels additional responsibility for effective education to uphold the Christian Mission to Islam.

On Books and Things

In any academic work, the library is a basic tool. The N.E.S.T. library, although the largest and best theological library in the Near East with over 20,000 volumes, needs to be replenished. Most books required by students for their courses have been added, but additional volumes in various languages are needed for the use of faculty and graduate students.

The relocation of the School to a site nearer the American University of Beirut has its advantages. The School has been handicapped for years by the mile and a half distance from the University. It has been difficult for the School to offer proper help to students and faculty of the University at such a distance. In view of the mutual benefit, the relocation of the School is a project to be taken into early consideration.

As a theological seminary, the Near East School of Theology points with pride and gratitude to the services it renders and to the present curriculum with its wide range of courses. However, taking into consideration its strategic location with all its unique opportunities, there is much room for improvement and progress.

....As In Cairo

The Evangelical Theological Seminary in Cairo carries on the tradition of providing trained ministers for the Church, as begun in Egypt in the second century after Christ with the Catechetical School of Alexandria. The Seminary in Cairo was founded in 1863 *by the American United Presbyterian Mission, and in* 1926 *control and major support of the Seminary was assumed by the Synod of the Nile of the Evangelical Church.*

In the same year, 1926, the present building of the Seminary was completed in the Abbasiyah district of Cairo. This location in Cairo, the largest city of the Near East, has many cultural advantages, and the eighteen Evangelical churches of the metropolitan area provide the students with many opportunities for practical experience.

The main building consists of a basement in which are the kitchen and the dining room; a first floor containing the chapel, classrooms, the library and the faculty room; a second floor with dormitory space for about 30 students, and a roof on which is a prayer room. Beside the Seminary is the house for the resident professor, now the Rev. Dr. Tewfik Salih. Behind the main building is a court for volleyball and basketball.

The Faculty

The professors, who must be approved by the Synod of the Nile, include five Egyptians and two Americans. The Rev. Ghabrial Rizqallah, D.D., is President, and teacher of Theology, Old Testament Interpretation, Music, pastor of the Evangelical Church in Ezbekiah, Cairo, author of books on theological subjects, Biblical com-

The Rev. G. Rizqallah

mentaries, and an editor of the hymnal of the Evangelical Church.

The secretary of the faculty is the Rev. Labib Mishriky, D.D., teacher of Homiletics, Pastoral Theology and Church Government. He is the pastor of the Evangelical Church in al-Malik al-Salih in Old Cairo, and author of about twenty-five books of sermons, Bible studies, stories and biographies. The Rev. Akhnukh Yusuf is treasurer and teacher of Arabic Bible and Doctrines of the Christian Sects. He is also pastor of the Evangelical Church in Saft Medium and Deputy Agent of the Protestant Sect in Egypt.

The resident professor, the Rev. Tewfik Salih, D.D., teaches Greek, Christian Education, and Philosophy and Psychology of Religion. He was formerly a professor in Assiut College. Teaching New Testament Introduction and Interpretation is the Rev. Ibrahim Abdullah, B.A., pastor of the Evangelical Church in Giza.

The Rev. Willis A. McGill, M.A., teaches Church History, the Life of Christ, Inter-Testament Period, and Public Speaking. He is also secretary of the American United Presbyterian Mission. The Rev. John Alexander Thompson, Ph.D., is the professor of Old Testament Languages and Introduction, Bible History and Geography, and Islam. Dr. Thompson is also one of the editors of the revision of the Arabic Bible, and the Arabic Dictionary of the Bible.

The Board of Trustees is made up of representatives of the presbyteries of the Synod of the Nile. They are responsible for finances, the nomination of professors, the review of the program of the seminary, and the admission of students not of the Evangelical Church.

Entrance Requirements and Study

Applicants must have successfully completed secondary school, and have passed the matriculation examination (*tawgihiya*) or its equivalent. This is the same requirement as for entrance to the Schools of Medicine or of Law in the Egyptian Universities. The Seminary further requires that the applicant must have passed in the English language. All students must be recommended by some presbytery or similar church authority with regard to Christian character and qualifications for the ministry.

The three-year course of study is similar to that of recognized theological seminaries in America. The basic courses are : Bible, Hebrew, Greek, Theology, Church History, and practical subjects, such as Homiletics, Pastoral Theology, and Christian Education. About three-quarters of the in-instruction is in Arabic.

During the school year, October until May, the students fill about one thousand appointments for preaching and speaking in the churches, Sunday Schools, and young people's groups in the Cairo area. During the summers they are appointed to preach in

churches which are without pastors, or as assistants.

The Library

The library consists of about 7,000 volumes, chiefly in the fields of Bible, Theology, Sermons, Church History and Islam. Of these, about 6,000 volumes are in English.

Great need has been felt for the translation of textbooks in Theology, Church History and Christian Education into Arabic.

Rev. Tewfik Salih and Student

Students and Graduates

In 1959-60, the student body of the Seminary numbered 36. Of these students, thirty were of the Evangelical Church of Egypt and Sudan, the largest Protestant Church in the Near East. Three are Baptists, one from the Church of God, one from the Apostolic Assemblies, and one from the Episcopal Church in Jordan.

Thirty-one students are resident in the seminary, and five are day-students.

Graduates of the Seminary have gone on for advanced study in many other universities and seminaries. They have gone to the American University in Cairo, the University of Cairo, the University of Alexandria, University of London, University of Glasgow, Princeton, Boston University, Pittsburgh, Chicago, Syracuse and the University of Missouri. Graduates have also continued their studies in Princeton Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh-Xenia, San Anselmo, Union, Hartford Seminary Foundation, Biblical Seminary in New York and Garrett Biblical Institute.

The total number of graduates is 378. Over ninety-nine percent of these have entered the ministry in the Near East. They have served not only as pastors, but also as denominational officials, professors of religion, writers of Christian literature, hospital chaplains, and missionaries. About 200 living graduates are now serving the Church in Egypt, and others have ministered in the North Sudan, the South Sudan, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Kuwait, Turkey and Greece.

This year there were more applicants than could be accomodated. Churches without pastors and mission fields in Egypt and elsewhere are asking for preachers. To meet this increasing demand the present building of the Seminary should be enlarged and the faculty increased.

We pray that the Lord of the harvest may send forth more trained laborers into His harvest.

WILLIAM M. MILLER

in a Persian Garden

***** The gardens of Iran are famous throughout the world, and travellers come from distant lands to see the roses and smell the fragrance of the jessamine and hear the songs of the nightingales. But of all these lovely gardens, the one most beloved by the Christians of Iran is the *Bagh-i-Besharat*, the Garden of Evangelism, which is famed not for its flowers and trees, but for the fruit of the Spirit which is produced in the lives of those who abide for a time within its walls**

Situated at the foot of the Alborz Mountains which rise to a height of 14,000 feet just to the north of Teheran, the Garden of Evangelism is cooled by the breezes that blow down from the snow-capped peaks, and affords refreshment of body and soul to those who enter its gates.

Many of those who have visited the Garden compare their experience with that of the disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration, and say, "It was good for us to be there!"

What makes this Garden different from other Persian gardens? It is different because every summer there is held in it a training school for church members, known as the "School of Evangelism."

The school was begun in 1948 for the purpose of training and preparing young men and women for the task of making Christ known to the twenty million people in Iran who do not know Him as their Saviour and Lord. Ever since then, for the three summer months, the Garden has been the home of a happy group of Christians who come from all parts of Iran for study, prayer and spiritual fellowship.

Nineteen have remained for three full summers, and having completed the course of study, have received a certificate. But the great majority spend a few months, or even a few weeks, sharing as they are able in the life and work of the School. The members of the School family usually number about thirty. During the past twelve years the total enrollment has been about 500.

The Curse of Babel

The Evangelical Church of Iran (Presbyterian) which evolved through the work of the Mission from America during the past 125

years, has 2700 communicant members, and is made up of Assyrians, Armenians, and converts from Judaism, Islam and Zoroastrianism. The national language in Iran is Persian, but many of the church members know very little Persian, and prefer to worship in their mother tongues, Syriac or Armenian or Turkish.

The students who come to the Garden of Evangelism represent all the different elements of the church, and bring their different tongues with them — and it is not always easy to overcome the curse of Babel and induce all to speak Persian at the dining table, and to pray in Persian at evening prayers under the Tent.

Living and studying and playing and praying and washing dishes together all help to break down the 'walls of partition' of which St. Paul speaks, and bring about the oneness in Christ, so essential to the life of any church.

Not all of those who come to the Garden are Presbyterians, for members of the Gregorian (Armenian) Church and the Episcopal Church have been welcomed to the School and have shared happily in its fellowship. Both men and women are admitted. The majority have been of high school or college age, but there have also been a number of older people. Aqa Jalily graduated at the age of seventy — and what a blessing he was!

The Tools of Evangelism

The most important courses are those in the Bible, and the whole Persian Bible is read by those who take the full nine-month course. Feeding on its truths, reading and memorizing, they prepare themselves for the task of making Christ known to others, a task in which the Bible is not only their source of strength but their most valuable weapon of spiritual warfare.

In addition to the Bible, there is a course in Church History, including the story of the great missionary Church of the East, which preached the Gospel through out Iran a few hundred years after Christ, and carried the Cross southward to India and eastward across Central Asia to China.

Since Islam is the dominant religion in Iran, it is necessary for those who wish to tell the Good News of Christ to Muslims to have a correct and adequate understanding of that faith. Hence all students in the First Class are given a course on Islam, in which the teachings of the Qur'an and the doctrines and practices of the Shiite sect of Islam (to which most Iranians belong) are taught.

Other courses include Personal Evangelism, in which the students are taught what the Gospel is and how it can be presented to non-Christians.

The course with the greatest variety of lessons is called Practical Training. Students learn to wash dishes and wait on table and sweep their rooms, skills which, in Iran, are seldom taught to boys. They are taught how to read the Bible clearly so that their hearers will be edified, how to conduct a meeting and lead a Bible class, how to visit the sick and cheer them without wearying them, how to sell Scriptures and other Christian literature, how to tell Bible stories with visual aid materials, how to teach illiterates to read, how to make use of correspondence evangelism — in a word, how to become effective members of the Church in Iran.

Guest Day

Wednesday afternoons, regular classes are called off and the students prepare to receive guests. All the benches and chairs in the Garden are placed in a shady spot by the lower pool, and tea is prepared for a hundred people. A reception committee is at the Garden gate to welcome the guests after their climb up the hill.

Relatives and friends of the students, members of the Teheran churches, and a few non-Christian associates resort to the cool Garden on hot summer afternoons and enjoy for a few hours the happy fellowship. After tea has been served, a religious service is conducted. One of the students presides, a Gospel message is given by an invited speaker, and then one or two of the students tell how they became Christians and what Christ has done for them. When the meeting closes, the guests are invited to the Literature Table and are urged to buy good books to take home with them.

A Bible Class under the Trees

Not On Hilltop Only

On Saturday afternoons, most of the students go to Teheran to visit friends, and remain in the city for church services on Sunday morning. On Sunday evening, after their return to the Garden, they gather under the Tent to report on what they have heard and seen and done during the day.

In one of these report meetings, two young men who were both Muslim converts stated that as they were riding in the bus to the city, they tried a new method of evangelism. One of them pretended to be a Muslim, and the other took the part of a Christian. They had a warm discussion of religious matters, after which the 'Christian' offered a tract to his fellow-traveller, who accepted it with thanks. At that, a number of people in the bus asked for similar books. When his supply was exhausted, the Christian evangelist borrowed the tract he had given to his 'Muslim' friend and presented it to another man, promising to repay his friend later!

Abundantly Supply

The School of Evangelism is conducted and supervised by a committee appointed by the Board of Evangelism of the Synod of the Evangelical Church in Iran. A grant is made annually to help in meeting the expenses of the School. Simple food is provided for which students pay about fifty cents a day. Scholarships are given to students who need help and will remain for at least two months of the summer, but students are urged to pay their full expenses if possible.

The Garden is provided without rent by friends of Evangelism. As God has provided for the spiritual needs of the School, so He has each year supplied abundantly the things needed for the material and physical life of the students.

The Fruit of the Garden

In Iran there is still much work to be done for Jesus Christ. In a land where there are twenty million Muslims, there are as yet only a few hundred members of the churches who are converts from Islam. Sad to say, many Iranian Christians make little or no effort to tell their neighbours and friends the Good News of Christ.

But we thank God that there are in many cities and villages little groups of those who truly love Him and who are trying to make Him known to others. And some of the most active and effective of these are the men and women who have lived and studied and prayed for a time in the Garden of Evangelism.

A garden, like a tree, is known by its fruit. The fruit of the Garden of Evangelism is to be found today in all parts of Iran—and it is good fruit which will abide, and bring glory to the Heavenly Gardener.

Mount Damavand, Iran
Photo by R. H. Kimpton,
Teheran.

GRAINS OF SAND

IN THE GAZA STRIP

by Christina H. Jones

Gaza, ancient Philistia, setting of the tragedy of Samson, today holds within its narrow confines more than its share of the world's sorrows and frustrations, for, in this area, 25 miles long and four miles wide, live 230,000 Palestine refugees, half of them young people. Playing an historic role in the modern world as it has many times in the past, it is one of the most sensitive spots in the Near East, second only, perhaps, to the long frontier between Jordan and Israel.

One's first impression of the Gaza Strip is of sand, the desert seeming to have spread right to the sea and into the homes of the people. Closer acquaintance, however, reveals man's constant battle with this mighty force and his victory over it. When we think of Gaza we also think of oranges and lemons, grapes and grapefruit, watermelons and cucumbers and other fruits and vegetables of excellent quality. However, it is the date that one is most impressed by as he sees the tall umbrellalike palms towering towards the sky with great clusters of fruit suspended from their leafy summit. They give an oriental, poetic beauty to the landscape and call forth a hymn of praise for the provision of such a boon in a desert land.

Today, the sand and the date-palms are overshadowed by the 230,000 refugees living for the most part in camps throughout the Strip, waiting to go home, and 100,000 Gaza residents who are now cut off from their friends and relatives, and trade with the rest of the Arab world.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency has the tremendous task of providing food, shelter, medical care and education for the refugees, but working in closest cooperation with UNRWA is the Near East Christian Council Gaza Area Committee. Shy, self-effacing, Egyptian born, Mounir Henein is the executive secretary of the Gaza committee and under his leadership it sponsors a large number of activities of such imagination and diversity that one marvels that one committee can attempt so much.

Furniture and Soap

Khan Yunis is sixteen miles from the town of Gaza and the center

of a refugee population of 60,000. Here in a simple hut are ten men at work, all tragically crippled, making cane furniture. One is blind, another has only one arm, his neighbour one leg, still another moves himself quietly and efficiently across the room on a coaster, for he has only short stumps where legs should grow. The blind man is the expert weaver, the others make frames for the tables and chairs. No makeshift, shoddy furniture theirs, but pieces that would be cherished in a summer home or on a veranda in any country.

In striking contrast to the cane work is a project in Maghazi Camp, made up mostly of Jaffa refugees. In 1958, seven young men from this camp finished secondary school, received their certificates, but like 2000 other students they had "nowhere to go." They were strong, keen and ambitious. In some way, they had an idea that a soap factory would succeed in Gaza. Soap-making would not require a big investment in equipment — but the problem was where were they to get money for even the simplest machinery?

In the early days people begged for soap. Used to soap of excellent quality, often relief soap seemed most inadequate. For centuries the purest soap in the world has been made in Nablus, Palestine. Visit a soap factory there today and you can look into a well of pure olive oil good enough to eat. In Gaza, olive oil is not as plentiful as it is in the hills so cotton-seed oil has taken its place to a large extent. The young men found that they could get this oil from Egypt, duty free, but these young men still had no money. They finally appealed to the Gaza committee and were assured a grant of L.E. 100. With this backing, and customs waived, they began and now sell all the soap they can make. Thus a new industry has been established, seven young men have been given encouragement and confidence, seven families benefit, and in the course of time the factory will grow and its products will increase in quality and quantity.

And In the Coffee-house

In all countries, men must have a place where they can relax and talk, a club or an inn. In the Near East, the coffee-house fills this need. There the men gather at all hours of the day and, sitting on coffee stools with their hubble-bubble and miniature coffee-cups, discuss politics, international and domestic, their own business affairs or those of their neighbours. Important matters are brought forward and important decisions are made. The coffee-house is as important to the life of the Near East as a parliament building or chamber of commerce. The simple low coffee stool with wooden frame and woven seat is in constant demand.

In Deir al Balah Camp (Convent of the Date Palm) five elderly men find some solace from their enforced idleness in making coffee stools. Through UNRWA and the Gaza Committee, they secured materials and

a small hut for a workshop, and now they are happily employed. The few cents they make each day has helped to restore their self-respect. The stools look small but they are strong enough to support a considerable weight through long hours of excited discussions or peaceful relaxation.

For the Youth

Imagine, if you can, 2,000 young men and women from sixteen to eighteen years completing their secondary courses in the Gaza Strip. Eager, intelligent, old enough to remember happier days when they could expect to continue their studies, they are confined in this narrow space with almost no opportunities and little hope. A few fortunate ones get work in other Arab countries and are able to send money back to their families, but all cannot go. The miracle is that there is no comparable juvenile delinquency problem such as is known in the west.

The committee gives assistance to these by giving grants to forty of them for courses in typing and shorthand, to ten especially selected ones for university education in Cairo, and for the training of five young men as laboratory technicians and X-ray operators in the Baptist Hospital in Gaza. These last find work at once in Kuwait, Libya or other countries at the end of their two-year course. The happy factor is that they are being fitted for life, although the immediate help, representing faith in them, is of inestimable psychological and spiritual value as they prepare for the future.

"...as a Carpenter"

Perhaps the most ambitious and spectacular project of the Committee at the moment is the carpenter shop. In a building lent by the Gaza Municipality and under teachers provided by the Social Welfare Department of the government, thirty-two men are busily employed. Seventeen of them are making conventional furniture of wood such as bedsteads, tables, chairs, wardrobes, and dressing-tables. The remaining fifteen are employed in the palm-tree industry, one of the most interesting projects

One is amazed to learn how many practical, every-day articles the exotic palm tree provides. The people of Egypt have long since utilized the trees so that nothing is wasted. The Egyptian instructor is an expert on the palm-tree and shares his skills generously. In addition to the delicious date so much valued by the desert people, it provides brooms, fly-swatters, scrubbing brushes, door-mats, stuffing for pillows and mattresses, crates for transporting fruit, vegetables and chickens and, last but not least, attractive furniture used extensively in country homes in Egypt and now, thanks to our team-leader, in the homes of UNRWA officials and in restaurants and hotels in Gaza. The wonder of the palm tree is

that it yields all these benefits without having to be cut down or die.

A new showroom was opened in Gaza early in October, 1959, for display and sale of the output of the project. Five rooms attractively decorated in modern colour decor set off the furniture to good advantage. But it is of the thirty-two men who have learned and are learning trades that one thinks when he sees the display, for it represents satisfaction to them and a future with benefits extending to their families — and to all who are touched by it anywhere, in the purchasing of materials, in the sale of products, in the achievement it represents, and the fact that it was made possible because some people cared enough to help.

Cloth Into Clothes

The committee's original and continuing service has been the distribution of clothing to the refugees. In the beginning, a sewing center was opened to mend clothing from the bales and utilize remnants of material and cloth of all kinds. Under the direction of a woman of taste and imagination, nothing is wasted, no piece of cloth or ball of wool is too small to use. Fragments of cloth not otherwise usable are made into colorful, attractive rag rugs.

A more recent development of this center is the knitting of sweaters on hand-machines. This has been made possible by a donation of money to provide new clothing. Knitting machines and wool were bought, and one woman was sent to Egypt to learn how to use them. She has now taught six girls. In a year, they have made 3,987 pullovers for school children and a few others on order. Not the least benefit of this knitting operation is that six young women now have a skill which can provide a living for them in the future. They and twenty others are regularly employed in the Gaza Sewing Center.

Little Grains of Sand

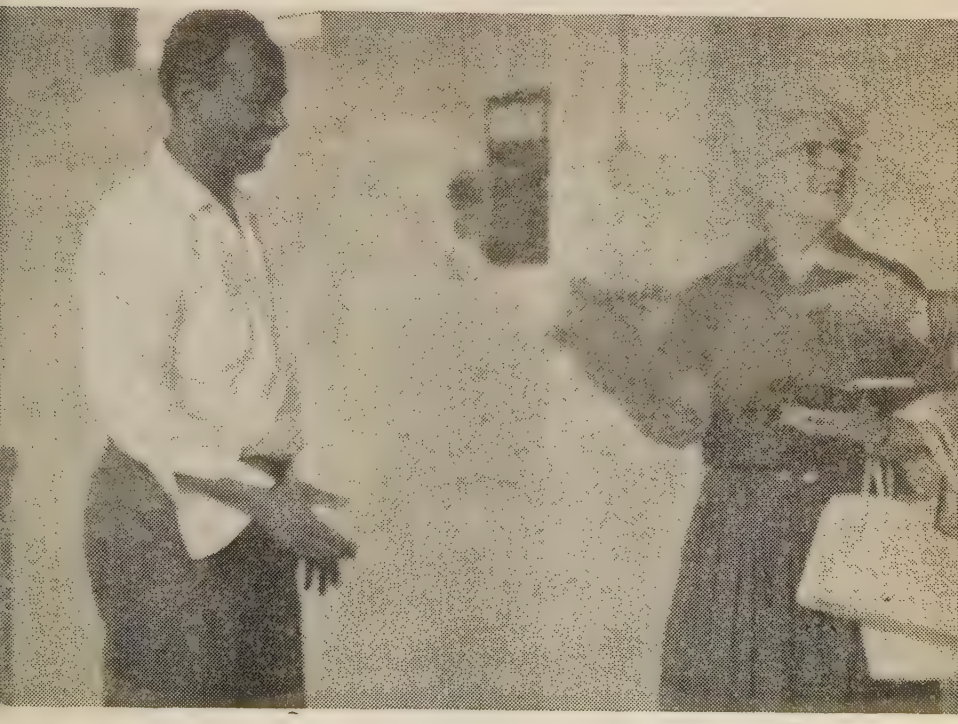
When one sums up the work of the Committee, one hundred persons regularly employed, assistance with various projects, help to students and orphans, help to sick and needy individuals not recorded here, and then remembers the 230,000 others in the Strip, it might seem like only a few grains of sand in the great desert of need. Yet,

"Little drops of water, little grains of sand,
Make the mighty ocean and the pleasant land."

comes comfortingly from school days of long ago to encourage even the smallest effort that is made in love. The world might say leave the problem to governments, but the spontaneous giving of the Church carries through in some miraculous way to the recipients, and in the Gaza Strip, the spiritual effect of the program and the number of people touched by it goes far beyond anything one can report through projects, good as they are!

ght: Boys at the Carpentry School

w: Mrs. Jones examining some date
rouducts used for mattress filling.



THE LEBANON BIBLE INSTITUTE

Above : Front Entrance of Main Building

Below : A Group of Staff and Students.

Mr. L. D. deSmidt, front row at right.

LESLIE D. DE SMIDT

BASIC TRAINING
at the Lebanon Bible Institute

It is inherent in the Gospel of Christ that those to whom that Gospel is effectively proclaimed should seek in turn to bring others within the orbit of its transforming power. But often undisciplined zeal produces problems that only unnecessarily complicate the Church's task. Often the gifts which young people have been given are lost to the Church because they are not developed in the service of Christ.

It was in answer to the need of an ever-increasing band of those who had come to a personal experience of Christ, for some kind of *basic training* for the service of their Lord and Saviour, that the Lebanon Bible Institute was founded in 1937 by the British-Syrian-Lebanese Mission (recently renamed the Lebanon Evangelical Mission.)

The first principal was the Rev. Evan R. Harries, an honoured minister of the Presbyterian Church in New Zealand, and a well-loved speaker at interdenominational gatherings and conventions. He came to Lebanon upon his retirement from the ministry to be Chaplain to the Mission. He quickly sensed the urgency of the need for training the energies of young people into more useful channels. In 1946, the Institute was temporarily closed when Mr. Harries could continue no longer. However, it was reopened in 1952 under its present principal. (The author-L.D. de Smidt.)

Since its foundation the L.B.I. has been housed in rambling buildings in the mountain village of Shemlan above Beirut, which is well suited to concentration on study and to the practical aspects of the training. However, plans are now in hand to provide modern buildings in a yet more suitable locality to meet the changing situations in these parts.

The purpose of the L.B.I. has always been threefold. First, it seeks to provide basic training in the study of the Bible itself. Second, it seeks to develop any special gifts with which students may be endowed so that they may be used to evangelize their contemporaries effectively in ways, however diverse, which bring the Gospel before their minds and hearts in clearly understood forms. Third, it seeks to train these young people of all denominations for leadership at all levels in their own churches, and in other branches of Christian service, as pastors, teachers, laypreachers,

youth workers, colporteurs, Bible class leaders, etc.

To these ends the training is directed. Courses include Biblical Introduction, Biblical Theology, Analysis and Exposition of Old and New Testament books, Systematic Theology, Pastoralia, along with other practical subjects such as Homiletics, Evangelism, and Islamics. To open the door for as many as possible, the courses are given in Arabic.

Three main courses of study are offered. The first qualifies those who have attained Baccalaureate or High School standard, for the Higher Diploma after three years of study. This diploma is recognized by the Synod of Syria and Lebanon as qualifying those graduates of their denomination who prove their worth for ordination.

The second qualifies those who have attained *Brevet* standard at least before entry, for the intermediate diploma after two years of study. The third qualifies those who have not yet reached *Brevet* standard before entry for a Preparatory Certificate, after two years of study.

The Institute owes much of its success to the inestimable help given by its National Advisory Council, chaired by Mr. Fuad Accad of the Bible Society. This council advises on policy, examines and accepts applicants, and aids financially those students of ability and calling who are not able to meet the fees. Under the wise guidance of this Council, the Institute has been able to raise its standards steadily so that today its graduates are to be found in the actual service of the Church in many parts of the Near East.

Over sixty L.B.I. graduates are today serving the Church. At least twelve are ordained pastors in about six different denominations. Some are teachers in Evangelical schools, some are evangelists and colporteurs, while others have returned to the business world and undertake many responsibilities of leadership in their churches.

Fourteen students are in residence this year, nine men and five women. There will always be room for more young people who have a real personal experience of God's saving grace to be trained for service in the Church.

The testimony of those who meet graduates of the Lebanon Bible Institute is that their outstanding characteristic is a personal devotion to their Lord and Saviour Himself. They are in the forefront of that pactical service of their fellowmen which expresses itself in the care of widows and orphans, the blind, the sick, the retarded and the ignorant. They are loyal to Him. Their basic training has enabled them "to love Him more dearly and serve Him more clearly", as they bear His Gospel into the world.

MICHAEL WILKINSON

"SANDALS AT THE MOSQUE" An Approach...

Among writers about Islam there is a great variety of approach. There is the approach that is definitely hostile, that can see little or nothing that is good in Islam. But this lack of sympathy defeats its own object, for as Kenneth Cragg says, "If we would in the end bespeak an adequate Muslim awareness of Christ, we must essay an adequate Christian awareness of Islam." There is the approach of the specialist in the comparative study of religions, an approach prompted more by the logical processes of the mind than by Christian love. Was it not someone in St. George's Close, Jerusalem, who said to me that those interested in comparative religion are only comparatively religious? This approach tends to ignore the fact that in both Christianity and Islam there must be "an ever vigilant awareness of the contemporary meaning of the age-long."

Dr. Kenneth Cragg's approach to Islam was first set forth in *The Call of the Minaret,* and in some sense, *Sandals at the Mosque* is a supplement.

Critics have suggested that Kenneth Cragg is too kind to Islam and that he sees in Islam a devotional attitude and a sense of the omnipresence of God that is comparatively rare. If this is true of the Muslim world, we must confess with shame that it is equally true of the Christian world. It is something with which both Christian and Muslim have to cope.

To hear Kenneth Cragg speaking is an inspiration. To read this book, and to attempt to review it, is much more difficult owing in the main to the depth of thought and the frightening sincerity found in every sentence. Any Christian who reads this book will finish it with a clearer idea of what Christianity really is. He will, at any rate, in the author's own words, realize that revealed solutions of our many problems are of necessity entrusted to co-operative minds.

Imperium in imperio

In his introduction to the book, Dr. Max Warren reminds us that for many the Christian faith is bound up with western aggression. One recalls a similar warning by Dr. Spencer Trimingham, "Islam is a part of the African scene, whilst Christianity still suffers from the handicap of being a

Sandals at the Mosque, by Kenneth Cragg. Student Christian Movement Press Lond n, 1959. 12/6.

western religion, and there is even some reaction against it on this account."

The reaction may be prompted to some extent by nationalism, but the very existence of this attitude of mind is a condemnation of Christians for westernizing a faith which, after all, had its birth in the Near East. Dr. Warren goes on to ask whether the west is ready to trust the Holy Spirit to lead on Christians in Asia and Africa or "must a controlling western hand be permanently resting on the Ark of God?"

Unperfected Perfection

In *Sandals at the Mosque,* Dr. Cragg sees the Christian student leaving his shoes at the entrance with those of Muslim worshippers, and trying to achieve an "alongsidedness" in which there is Christian love and not a scrap of condescension.

He points out in his inimitable way that the problems confronting Christian and Muslim are in many ways identical. The problems spring from the fact that "religions... react much more in terms of the past they inherit than of the future they face."

In this connection there is a very apposite reference to the Pakistan Government Commission on Marriage and Family Laws which gave its report in June 1956. There was included a minority report, reflecting the reactionary point of view, written by Maulana Ihtishamul Haqq, containing this taunt: "O ye Muslims of the period of revolution: Your religion has been perfected in regard to the circumstances of the period. but as regards future events it is imperfect and you can have it completed with the help of commissions."

Mutatis mutandis, this should cause some Christians some anxiety. Many have suggested that the present widespread missionary efforts of Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam are partly due to the failure of Christianity to discipline the western world.

Ya Mushrik

Dr. Cragg has much to say in this book about the sin of *shirk,* or, attributing to other than God power, right, sovereignty which properly belong to God alone. In these days when men idolize technical efficiency, this sin is not strange or foreign to us. The word *shirk* not only is used for idolatry, but also for commercial association, or company. Here it comes home to us that *shirk* is not only a Muslim sin.

"The multifarious and self-centred deities of the secular and self-centred world" of which we are all conscious remind us that only the approach of which the keynote is humility will ensure that our feet as they walk towards the mosque are "sandalled with the relevance of the Gospel of peace."

R. PARK JOHNSON

SANDALS AT THE MOSQUE:
...to the Partnership of the Presence

Sandals are a genuinely "down-to-earth" symbol of the Church of Christ. It is the thesis of Kenneth Cragg's new little book *Sandals at the Mosque* that our feet can be shod with the relevance to Muslim people of the Gospel of peace only if we are willing to leave our sandals humbly at the door of the mosque, to seek an appreciative understanding of the religious experience of the Muslim, and to relate our presentation of the distinctive Christian truth to the background of Muslim ideas. The footwear motif is an interesting and appropriate one which the author carries out very ingeniously as the vehicle of his message.

The Shape of A Cross

Outshining the perceptive insights into Islam which the book conveys is its powerful presentation of the unique message of Christ and His Cross, bringing the "good news" at just the critical point where Islam falls silent and fails to meet the basic predicament of man. In his chapter on "The Shape of a Cross" Dr. Cragg describes the failure of Islam to recognize the depth of human sinfulness, and the inadequacy of Islam's resort to (1) reiteration of the precepts of the law and (2) the effort to compel men's loyalty and obedience by the communal sanctions of the state. By way of contrast, the Christian message of God's redemptive intervention in Christ shines out all the more clearly and understandably. Herein is the foundation of any theology of the Christian mission to Islam.

However, Dr. Cragg insists that this message can be interpreted to Muslims only by those who have sympathetically entered into an understanding of Muslim experience, and equipped themselves to speak in language and categories of thought which are within the Muslim's own world of ideas. In the first part of the book, "The Quest of Islam", we are taken to a typical Friday noon mosque service. We listen to a characteristic sermon and watch the ritual prayers, all the time endeavoring to enter into the thoughts and reactions of the worshipers.

And the Conditions

The second part of the book, "Conditions of Inter-Religion",

Sandals at the Mosque, by Kenneth Cragg. Student Christian Movement Press London, 1959. 12/6.

discusses the inevitability, in our shrunken world of today, of the Christian having to live with people of other religious backgrounds and convictions. There is a helpful presentation of many of the pitfalls and temptations which are present where interpenetration of religious faiths is going on.

The third part, "Present with the Peace of God", takes us appreciatively into some of the greatest ideas of Islam, shows how some of these ideas point inescapably beyond the compass of Islamic views, and then moves on to the fuller adequacy of the Christian message found in "The Shape of a Cross".

It was, of course, one of the strong points of *The Call of the Minaret* that it confronted Islam at its best, but many readers commented, "This is all very fine, but the Muslims I meet are for the most part either too ignorant of Islam for Cragg's approach by way of Qur'anic concepts to be effective, or too disloyal to their own religion to be impressed by our interest in Islam." In this new book Dr. Cragg still insists that we must not define Islam in terms of Muslim unworthiness or disloyalties, but he gives satisfying attention to the large amount of prevailing skepticism among Muslims and discusses at some length the current tensions and debates within the household of Islam. The net effect is a more full-rounded picture of the different varieties of Muslims which one is likely to encounter in any given place in the Middle East.

Summer Schools in connection with the Study Program will be held the first two weeks of July in Isfahan, Iran, and the last two weeks of July in Jerusalem, Jordan. Further information upon request.

Plans have been announced by the Study Program Committee for two Summer Schools to be held this summer. The first will be held in Isfahan, Iran, the first two weeks of the month of July, and will be followed by the second in Jerusalem, Jordan, from the 15th to the 29th of July. Information on these schools may be obtained through the Executive Secretary of the N.E.C.C. or through the Program Director, the Rev. Canon A. Kenneth Cragg.

Operation Reach, the study papers of the Program, are circulated to over 600 addresses in the Near East, Asia and Africa. If you do not receive copies, communicate with the N.E.C.C., P.O. Box 235, Beirut.

ADLE NAKHOSTEEN

TOWARD A UNITED CHURCH

The growing sense of fellowship among churches throughout the world is mirrored in the Near East by a new confidence and drawing together among Christians of all backgrounds. Regional Christian councils illustrate this effectively and practically. Of these regional councils, the Church Council of Iran is a thrilling example...

To strengthen the Christian churches in their internal life, to encourage their evangelical outreach, and to work toward a united church; to bring the representatives of the churches together to discuss problems of mutual concern and to seek solutions therefor; to foster cooperation among the various Christian agencies at work in Iran and thereby make the total impact of the Christian movement in the country more effective; and to represent the member churches in their relation to other Christian bodies throughout the world and to interpret the mind of the member churches as a whole."

In this concise and penetrating way, the purpose of the Church Council of Iran is set forth in its constitution. Since 1951, the Episcopal Church of Iran and the Evangelical Church of Iran, along with Bible Society and Church Mission to Jews representatives, have worked together harmoniously in this interchurch council, reaching toward the fundamental aim of a united Christian witness in Iran.

Organization

Membership in the council is open to all churches that acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and accept the Apostles' Creed. Although the charter members are the Evangelical and the Episcopal Churches, all organizations that promote the interests of church life in Iran can send representatives.The Armenian Orthodox Church has also sent occasional representations to the meetings.

The two missionary societies that have been at work in Iran over a long period of time are the Commission on Ecumenical Mission of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States, and the Church Missionary Society. The former has served in the north, and the latter in the south. Through the years, as a result of their labours, the two churches came into being.

Close cooperation has been the keynote of these organizations. When matters of urgent importance have arisen affecting the whole Christian enterprise in the country, they have always consulted together and acted on a common basis. For many years, there has been a joint literature committee and for well over thirty years, there have been interchurch conferences and young people's gatherings. Considerable discussion has also been held on a united church, but up to the present the consummation of such a union has not been possible.

Normally, the Church Council meets once a year, or more when it is necessary. The Executive Committee, made up of a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, and a Secretary-Treasurer, acts in the interim. Among the functions set forth in the constitution are "study of questions of general policy affecting the whole Christian movement in Iran; ...represent the churches in negotiations with the government in matters affecting the whole field."

Correspondents and Committees

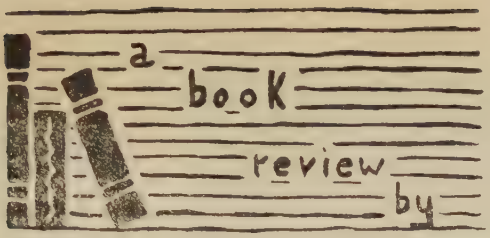
The Council has three standing committees: Literature, Youth and Blind Welfare. In addition, it has correspondents appointed yearly in the following lines: Religious Education, Church Union Study, Audio-Visual Aids, Youth Work, Bible Revision, Bible Correspondence, Medical Work, Home and Family Life, and others.

The reports received each year afford very interesting reading and information on the various programs throughout the whole country.

Common Life

In the last meeting of the Council it was agreed that a Study on the Life and Growth of the Churches in Iran should be carried out under the auspices of the Council. These studies are being pursued with the cooperation of the International Missionary Council. They consist of aspect studies, general studies of aspects of the life and growth of the churches, and situation study, a more intensive study 'in depth' of the life and growth in a selected local area.

And so the Church Council carries on its work in Iran, drawing all together in fellowship and common understanding, informing one another of the work done and to be done, and binding all closer together in the common task of preaching the Gospel... ever leading to the goal of a united church.



HASSAN
DEHQANI-TAFTI

"A GENUINELY HUMAN EXISTENCE"

The biggest problem in our church in Iran today is how to keep those who come forward as far as baptism and even confirmation and then disappear from the fellowship almost completely. Many reasons can be stated for this sad state of affairs, and this is not the place to discuss them all. But the biggest reason perhaps is that we emphasize evangelism (even that not enough) in our work and neglect the deepening of the spiritual life in individuals.

Baptism has come to mean the "end" of our efforts while it really ought to be "the middle way." It is comparatively easy for an individual to confess Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour once in his life, but it is extremely difficult for him to go on living a Christlike life, *especially* in an intense Christian atmosphere.

How can one learn to live a Christlike life in this world today? Marxist philosophy, and above all, half-understood Freudism, have taken away the old sure ground from beneath people's feet. It is extreme important, indeed vitally necessary, to preach the simple Gospel, but is it enough? When soil has been swept away by rain, it is not enough to merely sow the seed. Common sense tells us that the seed will be wasted. The sower in the parable did not scatter his seed in a soil-eroded area. His aim was the proper soil; the rest was by the way.

No! If we want to be co-workers with God, we have to learn His ways. We have to get to know our convert, and realize that he is a tender plant uprooted from his own soil in the deepest things of life. He is puzzled and bewildered about a good many things. There are a thousand and one things that he would like to know, but he does not know to whom he should go.

Apart from being very young in the faith, he is most probably emotionally and mentally undeveloped. We have to shepherd him very tenderly and lovingly, and that requires patience, wisdom and knowledge.

In fact, the problem of shepherding the newly found lost sheep is so formidable that it often makes the shepherd do one of two things. Either he takes refuge in an escapist attitude of merely reciting verses from Holy Scripture, and shaking his head, pharasiaically lamenting the sins of the world, or else dictatorially, "wishing" to direct people's lives exactly as one wishes them to live. Neither of these two ways is likely to keep any sheep in the fold for any length of time.

Patience and Love God gives us if we wait on Him. Knowledge and understanding of ourselves and others come as we grow in mind and spirit. To grow in mind we must read suitable books.

One of these most suitable books is Bishop Stephen Neill's *A Genuinely Human Existence* (Doubleday and Company, Garden City, N.Y.).

Far from adopting a defeatist attitude towards modern psychology, Bishop Neill challenges the world to adopt a Christocentric psychology. Christ is introduced as the perfect example of a normal man. He is the Norm, and everyone else compared with Him is abnormal. For, as he says, "If the church has sometimes looked more like a hospital for sick souls than a training camp for heroes, the fault cannot be laid at the door of its founder..."

The scope of the book is best explained by the author himself:

> "...We have tried to survey the human scene as it actually exists, not inventing problems where none exist, but not evading anything that presented itself as a genuine problem. We have taken account of human nature in its splendour, in its shame, and in its mediocrity. We have given full recognition to the element of tragedy in human experience. We have looked at man in relation to himself, in relation to his immediate surroundings in the family, in relation to the larger society in which he lives; man as caught up in the international tension of a world at strife, in relation to the universe of which he is a part, in relation to the eternal dimension, which, if it exists at all, is the limit and boundary of man's existence in time and space... At every point we have become aware of tension... At every point, we have found that the Gospels have something to say relevant to our problems..."

Bishop Neill leaves us with a promise of more books. Books on how to be a true pastor, a true friend and a true critic.

The N. E. C. C.
Executive Meeting
Cairo.
February, 1960

Above, in session

Center,
with moments of humour

Below, and visits from dignitaries of the Coptic Orthodox Church and the United Presbyterian Commission.

important frontiers of life in our time, where the Christian world and the world of Islam are in contact."

That he was a bridge-builder is proved by this verdict of a Turkish friend: "I came to know one Christian who did away with the chasm which separated us from all Christian... I have tested him for years... I came to believe that if there could be one such real Christian, there must be many more. I loved him and in his person, I loved all Christians."

Michael Wilkinson
— England.

Design of My World, by Hassan Dehqani-Tafti: World Christian Books No. 28. Lutterworth, London, 1959.

As I settle down to write about this brief autobiography of a Persian Christian pastor, the voice of a *mullah* rings out from the mosque next door. All the strength and all the weakness of Islam seems to be found in that impassioned voice as he delivers a funeral oration for some local notable. Those who have attended such functions will perhaps feel as I do, that it is not altogether fanciful to detect a sense of frustration and despair underlying the genuine grief. A despair and frustration engendered as much by the carefully calculated oratory with its sobs and breaks in the voice, as by the content of the speech itself with its insistence upon resignation to the inscrutable will of God and the need for patience in the face of the mystery of death, things which are the keynotes of the message of Islam to the bereaved.

How different is the impression left on me by this book, by my friend and pastor, the Rev. Hassan Dehqani, priest of the Church of St. Luke in Isfahan. His little book chronicles a journey from darkness to light, from hopelessness to a hope so profound, that with Job, he could well say: *'Yea though He slay me yet will I trust in Him.'*

In its very simple and humble way, this book, I believe, marks a landmark in the Church's encounter with Islam. For it is the intimate story of one who was brought up in a typically Persian Muslim surrounding, and who, by the grace of God and through the agency of faithful missionaries, was brought out from that background into a new and fuller life and hope in Christ.

I purposely included the word Persian in the sentence above because, for us at least who live and work in Iran, the insight it gives us into the Persian mind is of inestimable interest and value. For although Persians are for the most part Muslim, they are so by conquest and they are still quite as much Persians as they are Muslims.

For in a sense the author is a representative of the whole spiritual crisis of the modern world, both East and West. Apart from the last chapter, which deals spe-

cifically with theological differences between Islam and Christianity, the book might have been written by any young man born some 40 years ago, anywhere between Morocco and Indonesia.

But for all its universal appeal and application, the specific wonder of the working of God in one single human life, is the strongest impression that remains. As the author himself writes, "Just imagine the son of a village family in England of the Middle Ages not only becoming a Muslim, but leaving a good job and deciding to become a *mullah*." Here, in a sentence, you can realize, if you have the imagination, something of the distance the author has travelled and something of the sacrifices involved.

The book is, above all, a personal testimony written from the heart by an artist and a poet, talents the author possesses. It is a simple and moving account of his struggles to overcome resentment and despair and of his final achievement of peace through a deeper understanding of the meaning of repentence.

—*R. E. Waterfield*
Isfahan

Our Blind Family by Gwen Gaster. Highway Press, 1959. 4s.

One of the happiest little corners of the Near East is a group of buildings, mostly in danger of collapsing, among the trees of Isfahan. This is Nur Ayin — the House of Light. As you go in you will hear the sound of happy laughter and see smiling enquiring faces coming up to you, as the children come to "feel" who has arrived. Here are nearly thirty children whose lives would be dark, in the fullest sense, were it not for this School for the Blind.

In her most entertainingly written little book, Miss Gaster describes how the work started by the German, Pastor Christoffel, was in 1943 suddenly thrust into the hands of the Bishop in Iran, Bishop Thompson, and how two years later she herself came to be the "Mama" of this large family in Persia, after 17 years of work amongst the blind in England.

The Christian Medical Council of the Near East will hold its yearly meeting in Beirut, just prior to the Middle East Medical Assembly, on May 4-5. Further information -- and any inquiries — write to Dr. P. Manoogian, CMC Hospital, Beirut, Lebanon.

In the intervening period between one Triennial and another the Executive Committee is entrusted with the continuing work of the Council. The task is tremendous as will be seen from the business that was at hand at the recent meeting. The full minutes will be circulated to member bodies as soon as they come off Press. Meantime I am happy to share with the Council's many friends some of the important matters.

It is almost becoming a tradition for the annual meeting to be held in Cairo in the hospitable All Saints' Cathedral. Everything seems so proper and the members began calling in on the afternoon of February 2, 1960. Unfortunately the Revs. William Sage Woolworth and A. Kenneth Cragg were unable to come, the former on account of sudden illness from which we are glad to note he has since well recovered.

The meetings continued from Wednesday morning Feb. 3, to Friday afternoon Feb. 5, 1960. It was a happy experience to all to have several members of other NECC committees as well as friends sit on parts of the sessions. The Rev. F.T. Wilson Educational Secretary of the United Presbyterian Commission and the Rev. Father Makary as-Souriany of the Coptic Patriarchate were two notable examples.

The opening devotions were led by the Rev. Tawfik Gayyid vice-chairman, laying stress on the significance of our Lord's Church being the leaven (Mathew 13:31-32). It was a beautiful, meaningful and challenging keynote.

The report on literature was presented by Mr. Habib Said. 34 Arabic books were published in 1959. of which six were children's and twenty eight adults'. As a means to speed up distribution the ACLC was charged with the preparation of a scheme to cover the whole area. Better than publishing a book is to see it in the hands of a reader!

The fact of the franchise recently granted to the Lutheran World Federation for the establishment of a Christian radio station confronts the Council which is a Privileged User with immense responsibilities. The Rev. Harold Fisher pointed out some of these. They include the recruitment of competent personnel. Therefore it was decided to request the United Presbyterian Commission, the National Evangelical Synod, the Archbishop in Jerusalem and the American Board Near East Mission for personnel to serve on N E C C R A V C O. It was very much hoped that the Rev. Edwin Luidens will join up too by kind permission of the Arabian Mission, (Reformed Church in America). The NECC will be acting as functionaries on behalf of the African Christian Councils. When, before, has the Church in the Near East been in a position to reach tens of millions of hitherto unreachable regions? Within less than two years this invaluable opportunity will be ready at hand. The committee considered seriously these developments and would urge bodies and individual friends of the NECC to contribute generously to the new radio opportunity. Of course eventually all the languages of the area will be covered — Turkish, Persian, Armenian, French, English and Arabic as well as the various tongues of Africa. At the moment however a start has been made in Arabic.

Mr. Willard Jones reviewed the Relief work as undertaken by by NECCCRW. The Churches in the West, in addition to their moral influence to expedite a political solution to the problem have generously contributed in cash and kind over $2,000,000 — a remarkable demonstration of successful Christian cooperation in a work of mercy.

Further evidences of cooperation can be gleaned from the report of Dr. P.C. Manoogian. The second Christian Medical Conference has been announced for May 4 and 5, 1960 in Beirut. Also, according to Dr. Fahim Al Akhdary the Sunday School Curriculum for the first Quarter 1960 was off Press. Owing to delay not all schools were able to use them. Therefore it was stressed that future publications should be in the hands of the Sunday Schools at least one month ahead of the Quarter to which they pertain.

A tentative date for the Triennial Meeting has been set "toward the end of April 1961". Meantime Program and Nominations Committees have been set up, also one especially to enter into conversation with the ancient Churches. The plan of integration WCC/IMC continues to be the subject of prayer to the end that whether through individuals or congregations, through free-lance activities or well established organizations, the Lord alone may be glorified and His redemption may be effectively proclaimed.

WILLIAM N. HADDAD

Last Page Jottings

To Enrich and Strengthen

Theological education in every country stands to be enriched and strengthened by the stimulation of thought and forward planning created by the IMC's Theological Education Fund committees. Several surveys have resulted here in the Near East, and in this issue we have tried to give a view of some of the theological seminaries, as well as of lay training schools, of the area. Your prayers and concerns are urged so that the Church of our Lord may be enriched through these schools in strength and in wisdom.

Our Contributors

Dr. Butrus 'Abd-al-Malik is the chairman of the Committee on Theological Education.

Dr. John A. Thompson is a professor at the Evangelical Seminary in Cairo, and an editor of the revision of the Arabic Bible.

The Rev. Hovhannes Aharonian is the president of the Near East School of Theology.

Dr. Tewfik Salih is resident professor at the Evangelical Seminary in Cairo.

The Rev. W. M. Miller, a missionary of the American United Presbyterian Mission, is in charge of the Garden School of Evangelism in Teheran, Iran.

Mr. Leslie D. de Smidt is principal of the Lebanon Bible Institute.

The Rev. Hassan Dehqani-Tafti is the priest of St. Luke's Church, Isfahan, Iran.

Mrs. Christina Jones is the wife of the Executive Secretary of the N.E.C.C. Refugee Relief Committee.

The Rev. Adle Nakhosteen is the Chairman of the N.E.C.C.

The Rev. Michael Wilkinson is a former editor of the *News-Bulletin*.

Dr. R. Park Johnson is a former N.E.C.C. Executive Secretary.

That You Might Know

These 48 pages of the *News Bulletin* represent an investment of LP 55 (or 20 cents, or 1s6d.) of the N.E.C.C. in you, that you might know... Have you also invested in the *News Bulletin* and the N.E.C.C.?

Or perhaps you feel that it is a waste of time to read, and a waste of money to invest... Or you want your name dropped from the mailing list. Whatever it may be, please let us know with a letter, either to the editor or to the Executive Secretary, Mr. Haddad. Contributions may be addressed to either of the above, or to the Treasurer, N.E.C.C., P.O. Box 235, Beirut.

The success of the school is mainly due to the vast amount of Christian love which has flowed out from those who work there.

Pax and God guide..

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The Near East Christian Council

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The Near East Christian Council is made up of four regional councils: the Church Council of Iran; the Egypt Inter Mission Council; the North Sudan Christian Council, and the United Christian Council of South-west Asia (for Syria, Lebanon and Jordan). In these regions and in other countries, church bodies and missionary societies are also members of the Council.

The Near East Christian Council is an organization that seeks to make effective cooperation and witness of the churches in an area extending from Morocco and Algeria to Iran and Arabia, from Turkey to the Sudan and Ethiopia.